

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

United States Department of Agriculture

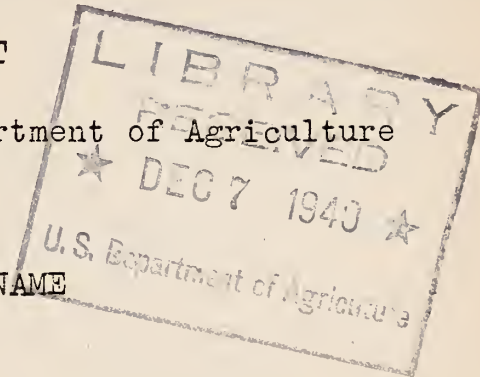
RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION :
DECEMBER 14, 1940 :

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1.9
H75M

THE MARKET BASKET
by
Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

A STEW BY ANY OTHER NAME



Be it ever so humble, there's nothing like a good meat-and vegetable stew to feed hungry folks on cold winter days. And when there are dumplings or some other starchy food to go with the stew, it's a hearty meal all in one dish.

Peeping into stewpans around the world would reveal hundreds of variations -- different meats, different seasonings, and even different names. Fricassee, ragout, goulash, tsche, chili con carne are some of the French, Hungarian, Russian, and Spanish versions. The English set great store by their kidney stew, and Irish stew needs no introduction anywhere.

In America, all these good ideas come together. Many cooks make their stews by Old World recipes, handed down without a change from one generation to the next. Other good cooks use some of the traditional ingredients, but cook them in the modern scientific manner.

Most stews start with low-priced meats, which after all are just as nutritious as the higher-priced steaks and chops. Less tender cuts, cooked long and slowly, make tender and savory stews. Tidbits and small pieces of tender meat can be used to advantage in stews.

No hard-and-fast rules bind the cook when making stew. But if she's wise, she'll start by browning the meat in hot fat. That's what gives the stew its rich flavor and deep brown color. Meat dipped in flour before browning has a special well-liked flavor.

Finish cooking the meat in water, barely enough to cover. A low temperature — simmering, not boiling — softens the connective tissue and makes the meat tender.

Long cooking for the meat, short cooking for the vegetables — is a good slogan to follow in making stews. Modern cooks know that food values disappear when vegetables are overcooked. So, wait until almost serving time before adding the vegetables, and cook them only until they are tender. Short cooking means full flavor, bright color, and firm texture for the vegetables.

When choosing vegetables for the stew, think of the color and flavor combinations you want when the dish is served. Carrots, potatoes, and onions are a favorite combination, but only a starter for the cook with imagination. Lima beans, tomatoes, and corn are used in Brunswick stew, a typically American dish named after a county in Virginia. Turnips, rutabagas, or parsnips are starchy vegetables that double for potatoes. To add a green color choose Brussels sprouts, cabbage, peas, green pepper, or snap beans.

Important as the vegetables are, meat is the backbone of any good stew. When buying beef for stew, you might choose the heel of round. It's a well-flavored, boneless cut from above the hind shank. The meat of the fore shank is also a good cut for stewing. Although it has quite a bit of bone, you can easily trim off the meat and cut it into uniform pieces. The flank is an excellent stew meat, even though the fibers are coarse. The neck, short ribs, plate, and brisket are also suitable.

Veal and lamb riblets, made by cutting between the ribs of the breast, are excellent for stew. So are small, very lean shoulders and irregularly-shaped pieces of veal, lamb, or pork.

Meat organs are another good addition to your list of stew meats. Many of them are low in price, and they add vitamins and minerals to the meal. Beef kidneys take precedence wherever there's an Englishman; but calf, lamb, and pork kidneys will do as well. Heart, tongue, and liver can also be stewed.

Seasoning for the stew depends on the meat and vegetables that go into it. Salt and pepper are taken for granted -- celery, parsley, and onion are also standard stew seasonings. Besides these you might use bay leaves and whole cloves, as the Hungarians do in making goulash. Paprika gives the stew a dark color, much liked by the French and used in their ragout. Thyme, marjoram, celery salt, and curry powder are other seasonings that may lift a simple stew above the ordinary.

It's the little extra touches that make the stew a dish of distinction. Dumplings are a great favorite, and they can easily be cooked in the covered kettle right along with the meat and vegetables. Allow the last 15 minutes before serving time, for cooking the dumplings. But don't be inquisitive while the dumplings are steaming. They get along better if you leave the kettle covered tightly.

Serve pancakes and sour cream gravy with the stew, if you want to do it the Russian way. If your stew is the chop suey type, serve it with rice and fried noodles. If it's an Italian meat mixture, use spaghetti or macaroni as a starchy accompaniment.

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

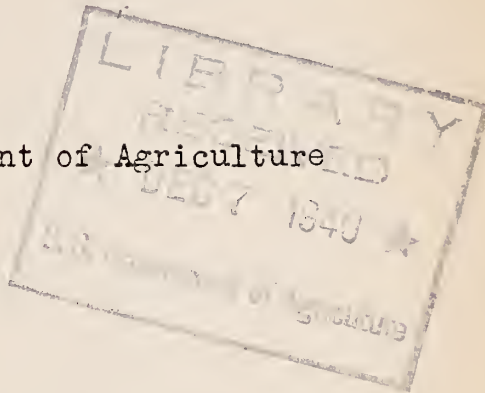
United States Department of Agriculture

RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION :
DECEMBER 11, 1940 :

WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET
by
Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

PRUNES--PLAIN AND FANCY



A good cook can be a fairy godmother to the modest prune, and make it into a noteworthy dessert, salad, sandwich filling, or bread. If there's magic in the story of the neglected Cinderella changed into a lovely princess, there's also magic in the story of a dry, wrinkled prune changed into a spicy meat accompaniment or a tasty fruit pudding.

A little prune magic is very much in order right now, while this dried fruit is so plentiful. Prunes are a between-season and all-season fruit, with excellent keeping qualities. With a box or bag of prunes on the supply shelf, it is possible to fill a gap in any one of the day's meals. There's economy in serving prunes, too, for each pound yields about 12 servings at a surprisingly low cost.

Prunes also have a good batting average on the food value score. The supply of iron is a major point in favor of prunes, and they also furnish some calcium. This is especially important, because these two minerals must be checked constantly in the average diet. Besides iron and calcium, prunes furnish some vitamin E₁ and some vitamin A. But don't depend on prunes for vitamin C, because most of that important vitamin is lost when the prunes are dried.

Starting at the beginning of the day -- prunes fit smoothly into the breakfast menu as the fruit course, or to change the flavor of the cooked cereal.

Prunes are so easy to cook that it seems almost impossible to go wrong. However, there is a right way to cook any dried fruit -- a quick way that makes the prunes plump and juicy, makes them smooth and shiny on the outside. Simply wash the prunes and put them in a saucepan, cover with hot water, and let them soak for about an hour. Then put the prunes on to cook in the same water. Cook them for about a half hour, or until they are tender. Serve warm or cold.

That's all there is to cooking prunes, unless you like a little additional sweetening and seasoning. In that case, add about two tablespoons of sugar for each cup of prunes just before they are done. A little salt added at the cooking time and a sprinkling of lemon juice at serving time enhance their flavor. If the prunes are intended as part of the meat course, plan to serve them hot -- adding sugar and spice and vinegar while they cook. Or the juice from a jar of pickled fruit will give just the right blend of sweet-sour-spice for toning up.

When prunes go into cooked cereal, it may be easier to use the old method of soaking them overnight. In the morning while the cereal is cooking, remove the pits and chop the prunes. Cook them with the cereal long enough to heat through.

Stuffed prunes make a good salad ingredient when combined with colorful fresh or canned fruit -- sliced oranges, grapefruit sections, pieces of pineapple, or peach halves. Soak the prunes until soft, cut a slit in the side of each to take out the pit and fill the center with peanut butter, cream cheese, or cottage cheese.

When prunes go into sandwiches they may be dainty enough for afternoon tea, or hearty enough for the children's lunch at school. Soak the prunes until soft, remove the pits, and grind them. Then mix with salt and creamed butter or peanut butter. Chopped raw apples, chopped nuts, or other dried fruits may be added to the sandwich filling.

Prune Betty for dessert is both nutritious and tasty. To make it all you need is prunes, stewed and pitted -- bread crumbs -- melted butter -- and a mixture of sugar, cinnamon, and salt. Put alternate layers of the prunes and crumbs in a greased baking dish, sprinkling each layer with the sugar mixture. Pour melted fat and some of the prune juice over the top. Cover and bake in a moderate oven for about 30 minutes. Toward the last, remove the cover and let the dessert brown on top. Serve hot with hard sauce, cream, or top milk.

Few fresh fruits are more adaptable than prunes for making a variety of desserts. Use them with an upside-down cake -- on the top or bottom, whichever way you want to think of the fruit side. Use prunes when you make dumplings, turnovers, or shortcake. Mix them with stiffly-beaten egg whites or whipped cream, add sugar and you have a fluffy fruit whip.

Prune bread is a holiday specialty, both wholesome and good. It's definitely on the fancy side. But the ingredients are plain. Whole-wheat flour adds food values and gives the bread an attractive dark color. Simply add chopped prunes to a standard yeast bread recipe, just as for raisin bread. Or roll out the bread dough in a thin rectangular shape, spread with melted butter and a mixture of chopped prunes with nuts and brown sugar. Roll like a jelly roll and either slice off to bake as pin-wheel rolls, or keep in one big roll for a roly-poly loaf with prune filling.

Quick bread is another good way to use prunes. And here is a recipe suggested by the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture:

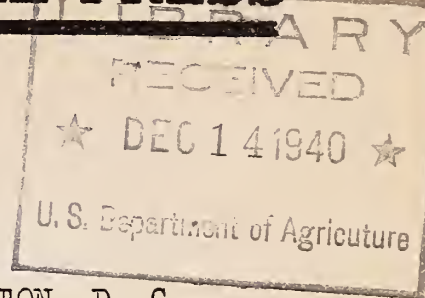
PRUNE BREAD

1 cup cooked prunes, drained and cut fine	3/4 to 1 cup sugar
1-1/2 cups sifted white flour	1 cup whole-wheat flour
1/2 teaspoon salt	1/2 cup prune juice
1 teaspoon soda	1 egg, beaten
2 teaspoons baking powder	1 cup sour milk or cream
	2 tablespoons melted butter or other fat

Sift together the dry ingredients, except the whole-wheat flour, which should be added unsifted. Stir into this mixture the prune juice, beaten egg, sour milk or cream, cooked prunes, and then the melted fat. Pour into two well-greased bread pans and bake in a moderate oven (350°F.) for about one hour.

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

United States Department of Agriculture



RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION :
DECEMBER 18, 1940 :

WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET
by
Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

THE HOLIDAY DINNER

When a woman is both cook and hostess on Christmas day, her hands are very full. Yet it takes a perfectly-prepared meal to reflect the happiness, the good cheer, and the warmth of the family circle that is so much a part of the Yuletide season.

Whether the food is simple or elaborate, it must come up to the best in the family's tradition of cooking and serving. If there's a bird it will be roasted golden brown and tender, the salad crisp, a relish that adds just the right tartness, pie with a flaky crust, and so on down the line.

All this goes back to the planning behind the meal. A written menu as a safety-first measure assures the right balance of food values, harmony in the color scheme, contrast in texture of the vegetables, and none of those last minute scurries because something was forgotten. A detailed work schedule helps to dovetail all the different preparations for a big meal. Clock-work at the last minute gets everything on the table at the same time.

It sounds easy, but in the midst of the preparations, even the experienced cook sometimes runs into a snag. So here are a few of the points to be checked, as listed by the Bureau of Home Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture.

QUESTION: I'm cooking my first Christmas dinner, having two friends as guests. I want the meal to be just right, without costing too much. Which bird shall I choose?

ANSWER: Chicken is always a good choice for the small family. Allow about 1 pound, dressed weight, for each person to be served. That means that a 5 pound chicken will make 4 generous servings, probably with some cold chicken left for sandwiches. A young duck is another good choice. And you'll come out about even with a 6 pounder -- allowing about $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, dressed weight, for each serving.

Turkey is another traditional Christmas bird, and it come in different sizes to suit most any family. If you get your order in early you can probably get a hen turkey weighing 10 pounds or less. Don't worry about the left-over meat. Cold turkey in the refrigerator is like money in the bank when it comes to planning meals on the days to follow. For the large family, it is more economical to buy one big turkey than two birds half the size. Turkey, being a larger bird, goes farther than chicken, so allow $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 pound, dressed weight, for a serving.

In many homes, roast goose is as much a part of Christmas as the lighted tree and glowing candles. The Christmas goose usually weighs from 10 to 12 pounds and will serve 7 or 8 people -- figuring $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds for a serving.

Remember, too, there's plenty of tradition to back you up if you choose roast pork loin or shoulder, baked ham, roast beef, or even a thick broiled steak.

QUESTION: Shall I have a first course? What shall it be?

ANSWER: A first course adds a touch of elegance, but it is not necessary for the informal family dinner. Tomato cocktail, fruit juice, cranberry cocktail, or fruit cup will stimulate the appetite without detracting from "what is to come." Many families find it convenient to serve the appetizer in the living room, so some other member of the family can take over while the "cook" puts the rest of the dinner on the table.

QUESTION: How can I be sure of making a perfect gravy?

ANSWER: Tastes vary -- to some folks a perfect gravy is thin and brown, to others it's thick and creamy. Giblet gravy is always good and it offers a convenient way to divide up these favorite morsels, so everybody gets some.

To make giblet gravy, simmer the liver, gizzard, heart, and the neck in a quart of water for about an hour, or until tender. Drain the giblets, chop them fine, and save the broth.

Skim off the excess fat from the drippings in the roasting pan. Leave about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, and stir in 6 tablespoons of flour until it is well blended. Then gradually add the cool broth and enough more water to make a thin, smooth gravy. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring constantly, and add the chopped giblets. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add chopped parsley, if you like.

QUESTION: Do I have to serve both Irish potatoes and sweet potatoes?

ANSWER: No, indeed. One starchy vegetable, Irish potatoes or sweet potatoes or squash, is enough. Besides this you'll want a green vegetable and perhaps one other. A salad is a matter of choice, but it does go well with the rich meat of the Christmas meal. For the relishes and extras cranberries are good, raw or cooked, celery adds a crisp touch, olives give a festive note, and special home-made pickles or relishes are not to be forgotten.

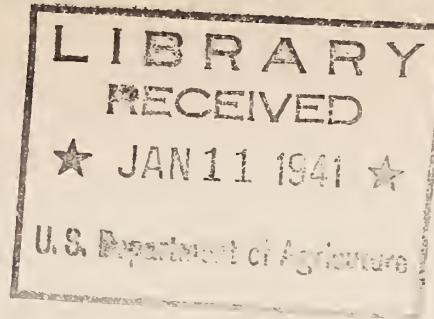
QUESTION: I always have a hard time getting dinner ready with so much else to do on Christmas morning. Are there any short cuts I can use?

ANSWER: Yes, you can prepare some of the food the day before, and have others all ready to mix together. For example, there's time saved if you have the bird all ready to stuff -- cleaned and drawn with the pin feathers out. And you can make the stuffing in a jiffy if you have the bread crumbs ready and the celery chopped. Put the stuffing in hot so the bird will cook more quickly. Of course you can have the bird completely stuffed the day before, but then you must put the stuffing in cold and keep the bird cold overnight.

It also saves time to have the salad materials washed and crisping. If the bird fills the oven, choose vegetables that can be cooked on top of the stove. Irish potatoes mashed with rich milk and butter, spinach or some other green vegetable all washed and ready to be cooked, carrots, snap beans, onions, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, turnips are all easy to prepare. If you're having a creamed vegetable, remember that you'll have to use one burner to make the sauce. Mince pie or plum pudding are good desserts because you can make them ahead of time, and simply reheat them while the first part of the meal is being served.

United States Department of Agriculture

1.9
H75M
req.
.....
RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION :
DECEMBER 25, 1940 :
.....



WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET
by
Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

- - -

UPS AND DOWNS IN WEIGHT

- - -

Before the last Christmas cooky and the last slice of fruit cake disappear, it's time to look ahead to the days and weeks of planning regular meals. Time to think about better nutrition, time to modify meal plans if there are any special diet problems in the family.

Most folks can eat as their appetites direct if the meals include enough of the protective foods. Yet there are many persons who feel that they ought to lose a few pounds, others who need to gain weight.

When the science of nutrition first entered the news many years ago, it was mostly a matter of counting calories, learning how much energy a given food would yield, and how that energy affected body weight. Then proteins came in for a big share of attention, and foods that furnished efficient proteins that the body could use to advantage were in the limelight. After a time the interest centered on minerals; and before long everybody was, and still is, talking about vitamins.

But nutritionists discourage a lop-sided interest that overemphasizes only one phase of nutrition. They point out the importance of all the different angles in planning well-balanced meals, and explain that a good diet must include foods to furnish fuel, protein, vitamins, and minerals.

The matter of calories usually takes care of itself, but in cases of overweight or underweight it helps to know something about high-calorie and low-calorie foods. However, vitamins needs, minerals needs, and protein needs are vitally important in both gaining and reducing diets.

Simply reading the scales will not always tell when weight control is in order. It's best to seek the advice of a doctor before trying to make drastic changes in body weight. And it takes some knowledge of nutrition to modify the diet without omitting any of the necessary food values.

Milk is one of the best foods both for those who want to gain weight and those who want to lose. Milk is such a rich source of calcium that it isn't easy to have a well-balanced diet without it, even if we disregard its other food values.

A pint of whole milk provides only a little over 300 calories, which is less than a single serving of most desserts. A person who is trying to lose weight may prefer to drink buttermilk or skim milk because they contain only about half as many calories as whole milk. But there must be some butter or other fat to give a staying quality to both the gaining and the reducing diet.

Cereals and bread, especially the whole-grain kinds, belong on every diet list. If cooked cereals are served with plenty of cream and sugar, if bread is spread thickly with butter they help in gaining weight. For those who are trying to lose weight it's better to use thin slices of bread or toast, with very little butter.

There are certain low-calorie fruits and vegetables that belong in both gaining and reducing diets. Outstanding examples are tomatoes, citrus fruits such as oranges and grapefruit, and the green leafy vegetables such as kale, chard, collards, mustard greens, spinach, Brussels sprouts and green cabbage. Yellow

vegetables such as carrots and squash, green vegetables such as broccoli, peas, and green peas are also important protective foods.

Everybody needs such fruits and vegetables for the vitamins and minerals they contain. When trying to gain weight, add the more filling vegetables, such as corn and fresh or dried peas or beans, and serve vegetables with extra butter, cream sauce, or Hollandaise sauce.

An egg a day is a good rule for most any diet. And meat, fish, or poultry should be fitted into at least one of the day's meals. When trying to lose weight, use the lean portions of meats and omit rich sauces and gravies.

But when trying to gain weight, include the fat along with the lean of meats and serve with drippings or gravy.

Fats and sweets help a person to gain weight, but they should take their proper place along with a variety of other foods. Weight for weight, fats yield more than twice as many calories as starches or sugars. So the overweights must use fats sparingly. Remember that nuts and most salad dressings are high in calories. Stay away from pastries and foods fried in fat.

Sugar and other sweets are also fattening and must be used sparingly. Most prepared desserts are high in both sugar and fat, so it's best to use fruits for dessert with little or no added sweetening. If you are overweight, beware of candy or nuts between meals.

Underweights turn the tables and season foods liberally with fats and sugar, enjoy rich gravies and desserts. They can add jelly or marmalade, plenty of salad dressing, and some candy or nuts now and then. These "extras" help to move the weight balance upward, but they should only be added to a diet that is well-balanced.

